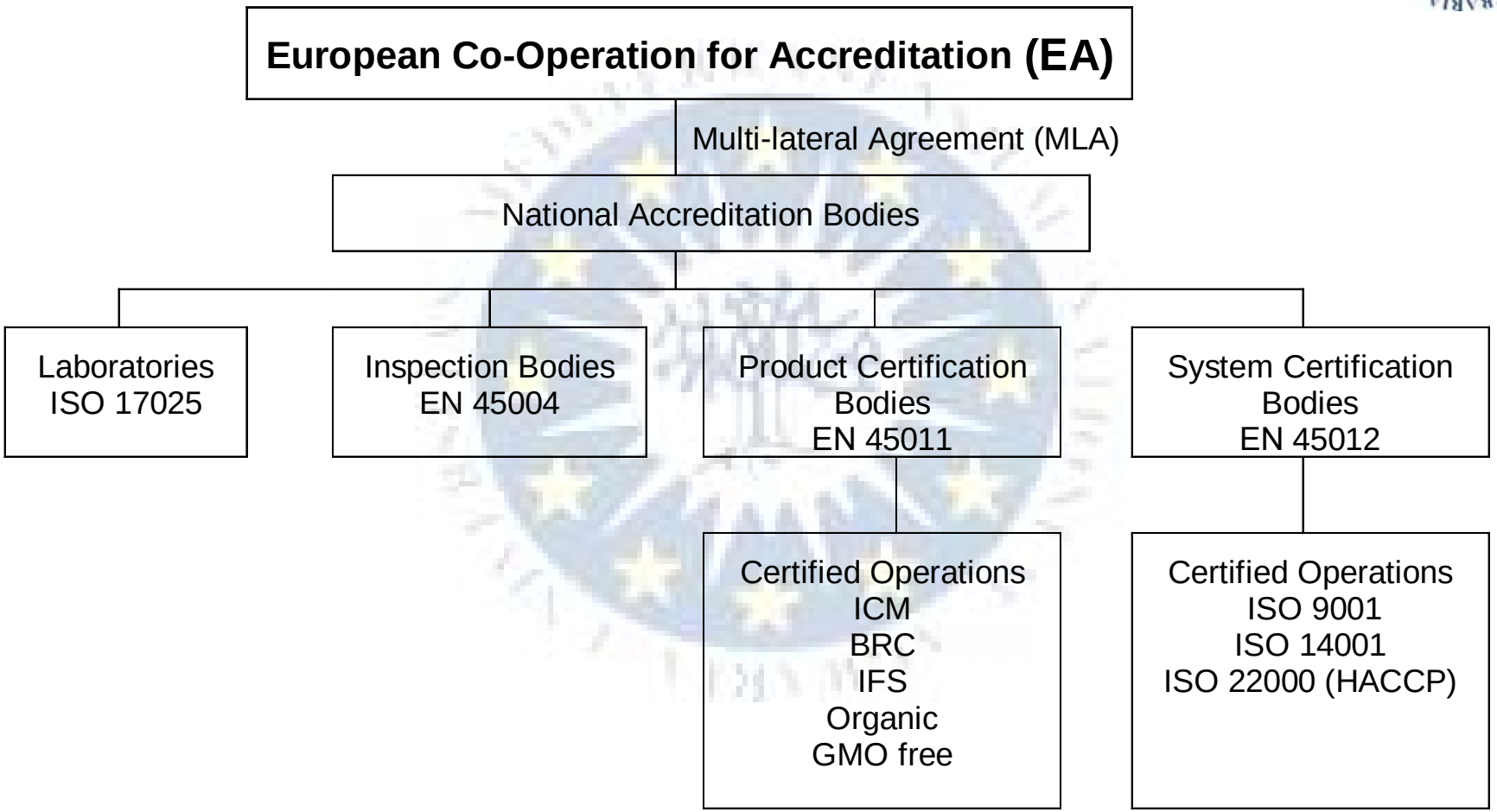
ACCREDITATION AND CERTIFICATION

Accreditation is a procedure by which an authoritative body gives formal recognition that a body or person is competent to carry out specific tasks

Certification is a procedure by which a third party gives written assurance that a product, process or service conforms to specified requirements

Both Accreditation and Certification are awarded against Standards.

Accreditation and Certification System



ACCREDITATION BODIES

In most countries, including all EU Member States, there is one national authority offering accreditation.

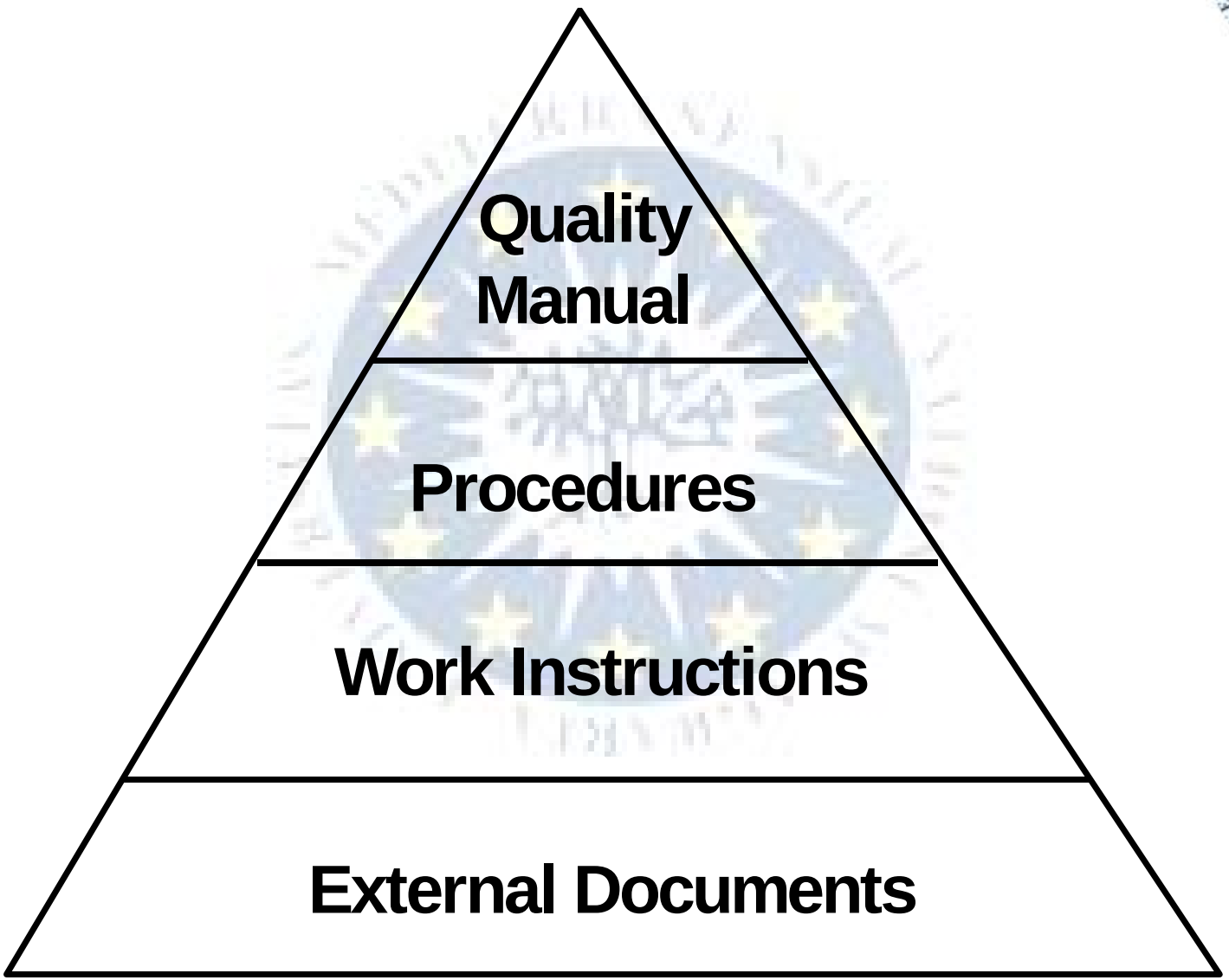
There is an international Organisation which coordinates mutual recognition between these national bodies.

ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS

A documented Quality Management System in operation.

Proof of Technical Competence.

QUALITY SYSTEM STRUCTURE



STAGES OF QUALITY SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT AND INSTALLATION

1. Specify and satisfy the needs in human and material resources.

2. Determine the scope of accreditation.

3. Compile the Quality Manual, Procedures and Work Instructions and collect all necessary external Documents.

4. Gradually begin operation.

5. Evaluate and, if necessary, amend documentation.

6. Full operation of the system.

It is usually useful to use the services of an outside expert consultant for the installation and the first stages of application of the system, i.e up to accreditation.

THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

1. Submission of application and documentation (at least the Quality Manual).
2. Acceptance of the assessment team.
3. Evaluation of the documentation and, if necessary, amendments.
4. If practised, pre-evaluation visit and, if necessary, corrective actions.
5. Evaluation visit at the premises of the certification body.
6. Evaluation visits at inspection sites.
7. Assessment report and, when necessary, corrective actions.
8. Finalisation of scope and award of accreditation.
9. Supervision assessment visits (premises and field).

EN 45011:1998
General Criteria for Certification Bodies Operating Product Certification Systems

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

A. ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE

1. The Certification and / or Inspection Body must be a legal entity and be covered by civil liability insurance.

2. The structure must be such that there are well defined responsibilities and duties for each position.

3. The structure must be such that it ensures impartiality and non-discrimination.

4. The fee structure must be such that no operator is excluded for financial reasons.

5.There must be a well defined person or committee which is responsible for certification decisions. This person must be different and independent from bodies or persons performing inspections and evaluations.

6. The Certification and / or Inspection Body must be independent of any activities related to the design, production, sale or marketing of products it certifies, or similar products. EXCEPTION: EN 45004 allows the operation of inspection bodies within such organisations, if they meet certain criteria.

7. The Certification Body may not provide consultancy to operators which it may certify.

8. There must be a person responsible for the operation of the Quality Management System, its audit, maintenance and amendments. This person must have direct and unlimited access to the highest management positions.

D. CERTIFICATION CONDITIONS AND PROCEDURES

1. The Certification Body must have specified conditions and procedures for the award, maintenance, extension, suspension and complete or partial withdrawal of certification.

2. The Body must have terms and procedures for re-certification in case there are changes which affect the specifications of the products or the certification standards.

E. AUDITS AND REVIEWS

1.There must be procedures and competent personnel to perform periodic audits, to ensure that the Quality System is followed and is effective.

2. The results of the audits must be communicated to the personnel.

3. Corrective actions must be suitable and effective.

4. The management must periodically review the system to ensure its suitability and effectiveness.

F. DOCUMENTATION

1. The Certification Body must have documented and available the following information:

- Its legal status and its authority
- Its certification system, including Standards and procedures for the award, maintenance, extension, suspension and complete or partial withdrawal of certification.
- Its financial policy and the fee structure.
- A description of the rights and responsibilities of the operators.
- Procedures for handling of complaints, objections and appeals.
- A list of certified products and their suppliers.

2. The Body must have and operate a documentation and data control system.

G. RECORDS

The Certification Body must have and follow guidelines on record keeping, including:

- The type of information recorded and the way of archiving.
- Provisions for the protection of records from accidental or deliberate tampering.
- Provisions for the archival and destruction of records to protect confidential information related to the Body or the operators.
- The time period that records are retained, taking into account legal obligations and accreditation body rules.

H. CONFIDENTIALITY

1. The Certification Body must have and follow guidelines on protecting confidential information related to the operators.

2. The Body must inform the Operators of the information it is required by law to disclose.

I. PERSONNEL

1. All personnel must be aware of its authorities, duties and responsibilities, which should be documented.

2. Minimum qualifications for each position must be documented.

3. All personnel must sign a contract or other document, certifying that they will follow the rules and procedures and that they will disclose any conflicts of interest.

4. The Body must monitor the performance of each staff member and implement training programmes to ensure their suitability for their position.

5. Personnel records must be kept.

J. AMENDMENTS TO CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

1. The certification Body must inform all interested parties in advance of any intended amendments in the certification requirements.

2. Interested parties must be invited to offer their opinions on the proposed amendments.

3. Once amendments are finalised, the Body must define a reasonable time interval, by which all operators must conform to the new requirements.

K. COMPLAINTS, OBJECTIONS AND APPEALS

1. The certification Body must follow documented procedures in handling complaints, objections and appeals.

2. Records are kept of any complaints, objections and appeals, as well as any corrective actions taken as a result.

L. THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

1. The certification Body must inform all interested operators on the procedures and requirements of certification.

2. Interested operators must submit a formal application.

3. The Body reviews the application and, if approved, offers the operator a contract, including the fee structure.

4. The Body plans the processes needed for certification, including inspection, evaluation, tests and assigns suitable personnel.

5. The Body evaluates the conformance of the products to the requirements of the certification standards.

6. If there is full compliance, the Body awards certification. If there is partial compliance, the Body informs the Operator of any corrective actions he has to implement within a specified time interval, so that certification may be awarded.

7. After certification, the Body is obliged to provide the operator with certificates or other documents referring to his certification status.

M. SUPERVISION

1. The certification Body have and follow procedures for the supervision of certified products and operators.

2. Certified operators are required to inform the certification body of any changes in product specifications or the production and processing methods. The Certification Body evaluates if such changes might affect compliance to the certification standard and may require additional inspection and evaluation before certification is continued.

3. If the Certification Body allows continuous use of its logo on certified products, it must periodically evaluate these products to ensure their continued compliance.

N. USE OF CERTIFICATES AND LOGOS

1. The Certification Body must have documented rules governing the use of the certificates and logos it issues.

2. The Body must ensure that these rules are followed by certified operators. Any inaccurate or misleading use thereof, or misleading reference to the certification system is sanctioned.

O. COMPLAINTS TO OPERATORS

1. The Certification Body must require of the certified operators to maintain records of all complaints regarding the compliance of their products to the certification standard.

2. The Operators are required to record any corrective action implemented as a result of these complaints.

Certification Requirements and Procedures

Most Standards require that a documented Quality Management System is in operation. In most cases, the documentation has the following structure:


Quality Manual
Procedures
Work Instructions
External Documents

Steps towards Certification

- Choice of Standard
- Specify and satisfy the needs in human and material resources.
- Compilation of Documentation
- Gradual Installation and Application
- Full operation of the system.
- Internal Audit
- Second and/or Third Party Audit

It is generally useful to use the services of an outside expert consultant for the installation and the first stages of application of the system, i.e up to certification.

Food Product Certification Standards

Standards for the Certification of foods have to fulfill the requirements of three key elements.

1. HACCP System

2. Quality Management System

2.1. General Requirements (Processes)
2.2 Quality Policy
2.3 Quality Manual
2.4. Management Responsibility
2.5 Management Commitment
2.6 Management Review (including HACCP Verification)
2.7 Resource Management
2.8 General Documentation Requirements
2.9 Specifications

2.10 Procedures
2.11 Internal Audit
2.12 Corrective Action
2.13 Control of Non-conformity
2.14 Product Release
2.15 Purchasing
2.16 Supplier Performance Monitoring
2.17 Traceability
2.18 Complaint Handling
2.19 Product Withdrawal and Recall
2.20 Control of Measuring and Monitoring Devices
2.21 Product Analysis

3. Good Practices

Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)

Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)

Good Distribution Practices (GDP)

3.1. Facility Environment (GAP/GMP/GDP).

3.2 Local Environment (GAP/GMP/GDP).

3.3 Facility Layout and Product Flow (GAP/GMP/GDP).

3.4. Fabrication (raw material handling, preparation, processing, packing and storage areas) (GAP/GMP/GDP).

3.5 Equipment (GAP/GMP/GDP).

3.6 Maintenance (GAP/GMP/GDP).

3.7 Staff Facilities (GAP/GMP/GDP).

3.8 Physical and Chemical Product Contamination Risk (GAP/GMP/GDP).

3.9 Segregation and Cross-contamination (GAP/GMP/GDP).
3.10 Stock Management (rotation) (GAP/GMP/GDP).
3.11 Housekeeping, Cleaning and Hygiene (GAP/GMP/GDP).
3.12 Water Quality Management (GAP/GMP):
Extra GAP: Water for post harvest washing shall be potable.
Extra GMP: Potable water shall be used and checked for contaminants at an appropriate frequency
3.13 Waste Management (GAP/GMP/GDP).
3.14 Pest Control (GAP/GMP/GDP).
3.15 Veterinary medicine (GAP).
3.16 Pesticide, Herbicide and Fungicide Control (GAP).
3.17 Transport (GDP).
3.18 Personal Hygiene, Protective Clothing and Medical Screening (GAP/GMP/GDP).
3.19 Training (GAP/GMP/GDP).

Production Stage

- **Development of genetic material.**
- **Seed and / or Seedling Production**
- **Planting**
- **Cultivation**
- **Harvesting**
- **Sorting and / or Processing**
- **Storage / Preservation**
- **Distribution and Sale**

Primary Production Standards

- EUREP-GAP
- ICM SCHEMES
- TESCO'S NATURE'S CHOICE

- Post-Harvest Standards
- **BRC**
- **IFS**
- **ISO 22000**
- **ISO 9001:2000**

Vertical Standards

- **ORGANIC**
- **ICM SCHEMES**
- **GMO FREE**
- **MARKS AND SPENCER FIELD TO FORK**